

## SKS Attended Start Network Annual General Assembly 2025



Attendees are applauding, and signatories are displaying the signed MoU (Inset).

SKS Foundation proudly participated in the Start Network Annual General Assembly (AGA) 2025, held from 15–18 October in London. Rasel Ahmed Liton, Chief Executive of SKS Foundation, attended the Assembly on behalf of the organization, reaffirming SKS' strong commitment to local leadership, partnership & collaboration within the global humanitarian system. The global gathering brought together more than 100 representatives, hub leaders, board members, and humanitarian professionals across the world to reflect on the future of aid under the theme "*The Power of Network in the Future of Aid.*"

The Assembly emphasized Start Network's shared vision of building a more inclusive, connected, and adaptive humanitarian system rooted in dignity & justice. SKS Foundation and the Start Network signed an MoU as a major highlight of the Assembly as part of the first-ever NGO–MFI Pooled Fund established for Humanitarian Response in Bangladesh.

## SKS' Participants Win 'Adammo Nari Purashkar 2025'

SKS Foundation's 4 program participants have won the '*Adammo Nari Purashkar 2025*' in recognition of their journey toward self-reliance and contributions to society.

The awardees are Momena Begum, Mst. Jahanara Begum, Mst. Faima Begum, and Mst. Momtaz Khatun from Gaibandha district, who were honored with crests and certificates at a formal ceremony organized by the Department of Women Affairs on 9 December 2025, marking the observance of Begum Rokeya Day, at their respective upazila and district level. (See page 3)



Momena Begum, Mst. Momtaz Begum, Jahanara Begum, and Mst. Faima Begum (from left) is receiving the crest & certificate.

## ANDHERI HILFE-Germany Delegation Visited Char Programs

A high-level delegation from ANDHERI HILFE-Germany visited 4 development projects implemented by SKS Foundation in Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha districts with the support of ANDHERI HILFE-Germany. The visit took place on 19–22 October 2025, aiming to review the progress, challenges & outcomes of project initiatives to improve livelihoods, resilience, and the quality of life for poor & disaster-prone communities in *char* areas.



The delegation is in discussion with the program participants and sharing the outcomes with SKS Officials (Inset).

Elvira Maria Greiner Keil, Executive Board President of ANDHERI HILFE-Germany, led the 10-member delegation. The delegation exchanged views with project participants and relevant stakeholders, observed some of the IGAs, environment & climate-adaptive ventures, and assessed the overall impact of project interventions. (See page 3)

## SKS Observed its 38<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary



The Founder & Chief Executive of SKS Foundation is addressing & a staff member is reflecting on his experience (Inset).

"Establishing SKS Foundation as a people's institution is our greatest success," said Rasel Ahmed Liton, Founder & Chief Executive of SKS Foundation, at a commemorative meeting marking the organization's 38th anniversary. The event was held on 1 December 2025 at the SKS Foundation headquarters in Gaibandha, with participation of staff of other offices through a virtual platform. (See page 3)

# SKS News

## SKS Provided a 3-Wheeler Vacuum Tank to Lalmonirhat Municipality



The Administrator of the Municipality, flanked by other officials, is receiving the key.

To expand access to safe & affordable FSM services, the *WASH Systems for Health (WS4H) Programme* of SKS Foundation provided a 500-liter capacity 3-wheeler Vacuum Tank to Lalmonirhat Municipality. A. K. M. Abdul Matin, Project Manager, *WS4H Programme*, SKS Foundation, formally handed over the key of the Vacuum Tank to Md. Rajib Ahsan, DD-LG, and the Municipality's Administrator on 24 December 2025 at the municipal premises.

Lalmonirhat Municipality operates an FSM system comprising a Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) and 2 vacuum tanks with capacities of 2,000 liters & 1,500 liters. Based on field assessments and community demand, the WS4H project introduced the 3-wheeler vacuum tank, which can easily access narrow lanes & densely populated areas.

### Uninterrupted Learning in Char Areas

(From Page 4) The keynote presentation, made by Md. Jamal Uddin, Project Coordinator, ICDP- *Shishuder Jonno*, upheld a significant progress in improving access to education and child protection in hard-to-reach *char* areas. Under the program component titled *Rongdhonu Khelaghori*, 1,500 children were successfully prepared and enrolled in government primary schools. Additionally, targeted learning support enabled 900 weak & irregular students to overcome learning gaps, with all of them passing school assessment examinations.

The Chief Guest noted that the achievements demonstrate how coordinated & collective efforts can bring meaningful change even in geographically challenging *chars*. "For ensuring education, health, protection, and the holistic development of children, such initiatives are essential," he said.

Jadob Sarker, ADC-General, Gaibandha, the Special Guest, appreciated the project's efforts in promoting child development in the underserved *chars* of Gaibandha.

Through a lively discussion, the participants put forward several recommendations, including strengthening coordination among local communities, parents, school management committees, and relevant institutions.

### Bangladesh Bank Representative Visited

(From Page 4) Md. Gaffar Khan, Assistant Director of Bangladesh Bank; Baharam Khan, Coordinator (Field Operations), and Md. Harun Or Rashid, Project Manager of the SMAP project of SKS Foundation were also present during the visit.

### Experts Urged Inclusion of WASH

(From Page 4) The Network urged political parties to integrate strong and actionable WASH commitments into their election manifestos to safeguard public health and protect the lives & dignity of people across the country. Through a comprehensive memorandum, the Network called for dedicated national budget allocation for WASH, clear policies & regulations on MHM, a formal declaration of WASH as a priority sector, employment generation through the WASH industry, and the development of sustainable economic models for WASH service delivery. The dialogue also emphasized the need for investment in climate-adaptive WASH infrastructure, promotion of innovative technologies & research, and the incorporation of WASH components under CSR initiatives.

Political leaders & representatives attending the dialogue agreed with the presented recommendations and conveyed optimism that WASH priorities would be reflected in their respective election manifestos.

The Network of WASH Networks platform includes the BWIN, BWWA, CJA, CUP, CANSA Bangladesh, FANSA Bangladesh, EWP FSM Network, IWA Bangladesh Chapter, MHM Platform, SSA, and SWA, and WaterAid Bangladesh.

### Dialogue on SDG Progress of WASH

(From Page 4) Engineer Md. Saihan Ali, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Gaibandha, presented the keynote. Citing *JMP* 2024 data, he showed 59% population has access to safely managed drinking water, while 98% have access to basic water services. However, only 37% population is covered by safely managed sanitation, leaving 63% at risk. He further echoed that although open defecation has been reduced to nearly zero, only 36.4% people have access to safely managed sanitation services. Alarmingly, about 99% of fecal waste is still released untreated into the environment, posing serious public health and environmental risks.

Professionals in the event said that untreated toilet waste is frequently discharged into drains, canals, and water bodies, ultimately contaminating drinking water sources, effectively turning unsafe sanitation into another form of open defecation. Participants emphasized that progress on SDG 6 is closely linked to SDG 13, highlighting the need for climate-resilient WASH systems, safe fecal sludge management, and stronger local-level adaptation measures.

The dialogue concluded with a set of recommendations, including stricter enforcement of existing laws, ensuring round-the-clock operation of effluent treatment plants, promoting water reuse, preventing water wastage and pollution, and investing in affordable, sustainable, and climate-resilient technologies.

## Public Hearing Held

A public hearing focusing on agricultural and legal services was held in Fulchari Upazila, Gaibandha on 19 November 2025. The event was organized by SKS Foundation's *Community-based Resilience Women's Empowerment & Action (CREA) Project* at the Fulchari Government Pilot High School premises. Md. Abu Taleb, Assistant Agriculture Extension Officer, responded to agriculture-related queries, while Md. Mosharaf Hossain, Sub-Inspector of Fulchari Police Station, addressed legal concerns raised by the public.

The gathering raised a range of challenges faced by local farmers, including accessing government support, opportunities for modern agricultural training & advisory services, managing fertilizer, seed & irrigation, and problems related to the marketing of agricultural products. Legal issues were also discussed extensively, with participants raising concerns related to land disputes, inheritance complications, prevention of child marriage, domestic violence, family conflicts, custody matters, debt-related problems, fraud, and access to rural justice and legal protection mechanisms.



Assistant Agriculture Extension Officer is responding to public queries while a participant is raising an issue (Inset).

The public urged relevant departments and authorities to ensure stronger coordination among institutions to promote agricultural development, enhance legal awareness, and ensure timely support for farmers and other vulnerable groups.

## ANDHERI HILFE-Germany Delegation Visited

(From Page 1) In Lalmonirhat, the delegation visited Kalmati village under Khuniyagachh union, Lalmonirhat Sadar, where the *Expanded Livelihood for 2000 Poor Households and Increased Resilience (ELIR) Project* supports women groups in the chars of the Teesta River. In Gaibandha, the delegation visited Belka Nawabganj village in Sundarganj upazila and observed the intervention of the *Lighting the Poor (LTP) Project*, which has provided free solar home systems to 355 vulnerable families.

At the Haldia and Bharatkali unions under Saghata upazila, the delegation observed the ELIR Project, which has supported 5,000 island households through plinth raising and other climate-adaptive interventions and income-generating activities. The delegation also noted progress in reducing child marriage and empowering women to engage with local government services & facilities. Alongside, the delegation also visited SKS Eye Hospital at Gaibandha town and observed the services under the *Prevention of Avoidable Blindness (PAB) Project*.

In a Debriefing Meeting at SKS' Head Office, Gaibandha, on 22 October 2025, with the presence of Rasel Ahmed Liton, Chief Executive of SKS Foundation and other senior officials, the delegation shared the outcomes of different projects they visited.

## Stipends Provided to Children of Marginal Families

SKS Foundation provided stipends to primary-level students from 32 selected marginal families in Bogura and Naogaon districts to prevent school dropouts caused by financial hardship in partnership with Anukul Foundation. Of the recipients, 15 are boys & 17 are girls from the program participant families of SKS' Microfinance Program. The stipends were distributed at SKS' respective Branch Offices on 12 December 2025.



A mother of a child is receiving the stipend from Suchala Project staff.

## SKS' Participants Win 'Adammo Nari Purashkar 2025'

(From Page 1) Overcoming social and environmental challenges, Momena Begum of Fazlupur Union of Fulchari Upazila established herself as a successful entrepreneur and received the award in the Economically Successful Woman category. Mst. Jahanara Begum of Fazlupur Union of Fulchari Upazila was awarded in the Outstanding Contribution to Social Development category for her sustained efforts in addressing social superstitions, promoting women's & children's rights, and advancing justice & social inclusion.

Born with physical disabilities and raised in extreme poverty, Mst. Faima Begum, from Ghuridah village under Ghuridah Union in Saghata Upazila, chose entrepreneurship over begging and successfully established a small business. She received the award in the Economically Successful Woman category for achieving self-reliance and inspiring others. Mst. Momtaz Khatun, a resident of Durgapur village under Darbasta Union in Gobindaganj Upazila, was also recognized in the Economically Successful Woman category. Through her entrepreneurial initiatives, she has created employment opportunities and contributed to the economic empowerment of other women. She received the award at both the district and upazila levels.

## SKS Observed its 38<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary

(From Page 1) Rasel Ahmed Liton reflected on the organization's long journey since its establishment on 1 December 1987. "Today, SKS is not merely an organization; it has become a symbol of hope & aspiration for millions of people. The greatest strength behind our journey has been the trust & confidence of the people in SKS. On this anniversary, we are not just remembering past successes; we are recommitting ourselves to confronting the difficult challenges ahead," he said.

Several officials also shared reflections on the organization's ideals and their professional experiences working with SKS, highlighting its role in community development and social transformation.

## “Uninterrupted Learning in Char Areas Is a Remarkable Achievement”



The Chief Guest is addressing the audience, while the participants are seen (Inset).

“Ensuring uninterrupted learning for children in remote chars, is truly a remarkable achievement,” said Md. Azizur Rahman, Divisional Deputy Director, Directorate of Primary Education, Rangpur Division, while inaugurating the Results Review Workshop 2025 as the Chief Guest. The 2-day Workshop was held on 26-27 November 2025 at SKS Inn, Gaibandha, under SKS Foundation’s *Integrated Child Development Programme-Shishuder Jonno*, supported by Save the Children. (See page 2)

## Bangladesh Bank Representative Visited SMAP



The Joint Director of Bangladesh Bank (middle) is observing a project participant's initiative.

Farhana Islam, Joint Director of the Agricultural Credit Department at the Bangladesh Bank, visited the field activities and progress of the *Small and Marginal-Sized Farmers Agriculture Productivity Improvement and Diversification Financing Project (SMAP)*, implemented by SKS Foundation. She visited Kalpani village of Bajra Union in Ulipur Upazila, Kurigram on 5 November 2025.

Farhana Islam observed agriculture-based initiatives undertaken by members of the local *Muktā Mahila Samity* with loan & technical support under the *SMAP* project. She examined income-generating activities. She interacted with project participants and assessed the project’s role in boosting income & livelihoods. She also provided necessary guidance to ensure more effective & sustainable use of agricultural credit. (See page 2)

## Experts Urged Inclusion of WASH in Election Manifestos

A national dialogue on Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) was held on 15 December 2025 at a hotel in Dhaka, calling for the inclusion of strong WASH commitments in the election manifestos of political parties contesting the upcoming 13th national parliamentary election. The dialogue was organized by the platform Network of WASH Networks, comprising 10 national & international networks working in the WASH sector. The dialogue brought together representatives from major political parties, WASH professionals, and policy advocates. (See page 2)



The Political leaders & WASH experts are engaged in dialogue.

## Dialogue on SDG Progress of WASH & Climate Action Held

Despite Bangladesh having nearly eliminated open defecation and having access to basic water services, climate change, weak enforcement, and widening inequality continue to threaten progress toward SDG 6 on water & sanitation, and SDG 13 on climate action. Equitable WASH services remain a major challenge- professionals upheld at a dialogue on held in SKS Inn, Gaibandha, on 22 December 2025.

The dialogue, titled “Dialogue on SDG Progress of WASH and Climate Action,” was organized by SKS Foundation- FANSB Bangladesh Secretariat, under its *Rising for Rights for Strengthening Civil Society Network to Achieve SDG 6 Project*. The event brought together government officials, WASH and climate professionals, development practitioners, members of civil society, and relevant forums. (See page 2)



The WASH and Climate professionals are sharing ideas and perspectives in the dialogue.

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